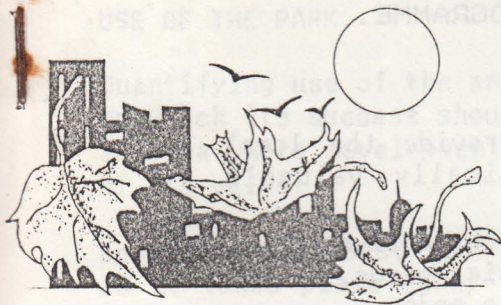
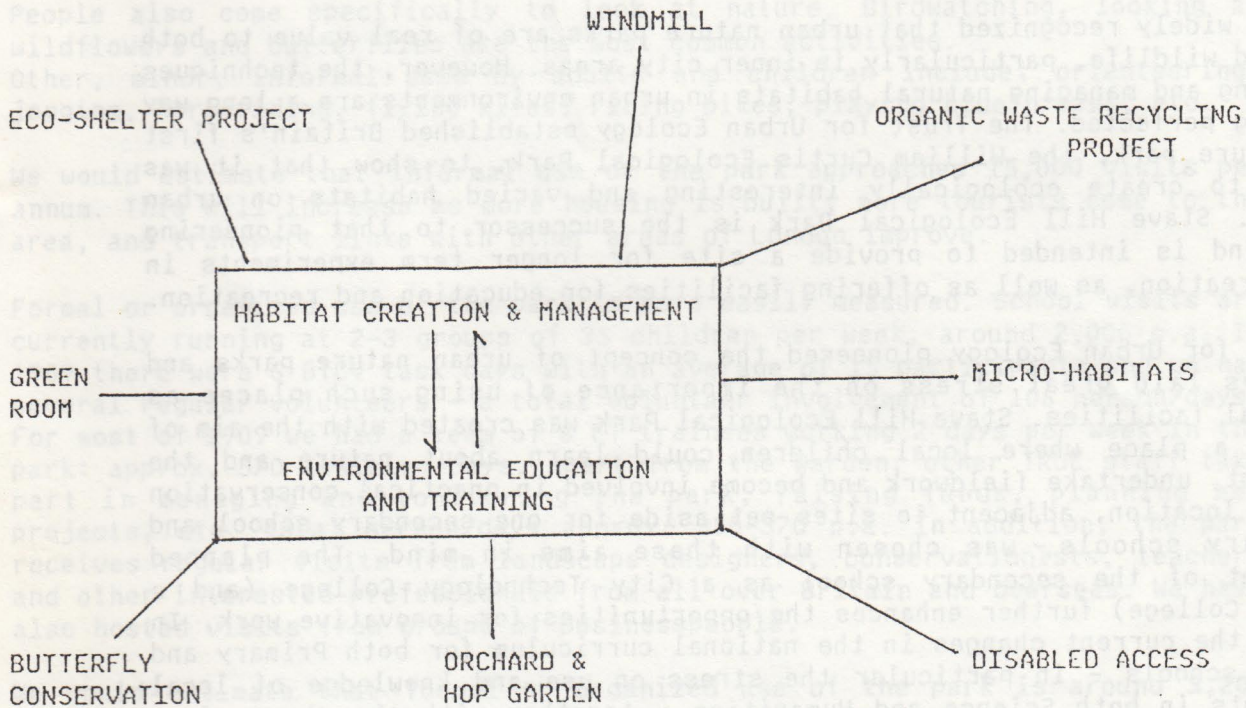




TRUE

TRUST FOR URBAN ECOLOGY

STAVE HILL The Ecological Park.



STAVE HILL ECOLOGICAL PARK - 3 YEAR DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME.

Aims.

To continue to manage the park to a high standard and provide the local community with an attractive, interesting and ecologically valuable greenspace.

To further enhance its value as an educational facility for the local schools.

To improve facilities for sections of the community with special needs.

To create new habitats and features for wildlife and people to enjoy.

To develop the park's role as a national demonstration site for habitat creation, urban wildlife management and environmental education.

Total cost: £133,454

Revenue: £109,661

Capital: £ 23,793

Background.

It is now widely recognized that urban nature parks are of real value to both people and wildlife, particularly in inner city areas. However, the techniques of creating and managing natural habitats in urban environments are a long way from being perfected. The Trust for Urban Ecology established Britain's first urban nature park, the William Curtis Ecological Park, to show that it was possible to create ecologically interesting and varied habitats on urban wasteland. Stave Hill Ecological Park is the successor to that pioneering venture and is intended to provide a site for longer term experiments in habitat creation, as well as offering facilities for education and recreation.

The Trust for Urban Ecology pioneered the concept of urban nature parks and has always laid great stress on the importance of using such places as educational facilities. Stave Hill Ecological Park was created with the aim of providing a place where local children could learn about nature and the environment, undertake fieldwork and become involved in practical conservation work. Its location, adjacent to sites set aside for one secondary school and two primary schools, was chosen with these aims in mind. The planned development of the secondary school as a City Technology College (and a Community College) further enhances the opportunities for innovative work. In addition, the current changes in the national curriculum for both Primary and Secondary schools - in particular the stress on use and knowledge of local environments in both Science and Humanities - together with the change from ILEA to Borough Education Authorities further increases the potential value of the park as an educational facility.

TRUE is already working closely with Southwark Council and other local voluntary-sector organizations, notably the Pumphouse Educational Trust and Willowbrook Urban Studies Centre, to develop facilities and policies for environmental education in the Borough.

The park is also a valuable resource for local wildlife - and will become more important as nearby areas of wasteland are developed. Although it was bare ground only 4 years ago, the park now supports an impressive array of wildflowers and insects, together with amphibians and small mammals, many species of birds (including skylarks and kestrels) and even foxes. Our programme of habitat creation and management will further enhance the park's wildlife value by introducing new species and plant communities. This in turn will increase its usefulness for education and its attractiveness to the casual visitor.

At present the park is managed by ET trainees, volunteers and a Warden funded from TRUE's own slender resources. The Trust believes that in order to achieve its full potential the park requires increased resources to fund more staff and a programme of capital spending. This programme is summarized below.

USE OF THE PARK.

Quantifying use of the an urban nature park by people is not the only criteria by which its success should be judged, particularly as Stave Hill is located in an area where development is still underway, but it is an important indicator of its value.

Some informal uses, such as dog-walking, are very hard to measure accurately as it takes place early in the morning and late at night, when site wardens are rarely present. "Through-routing" (using the park as a pleasant place to walk through on the way to work or the shops) is also difficult to measure, but research suggests that around 25% of those walking through nature parks have deliberately chosen that route, even though it may be longer than other alternatives.

We estimate that some 70 people/week regularly walk dogs in the park. Counts of people simply walking in and through the park vary from 10-20 per day in Winter to several hundred on fine Summer weekends. People also come specifically to look at nature. Birdwatching, looking at wildflowers and butterflies are the most common activities. Other, minor, informal uses by adults and children include: orienteering, jogging, horseriding, flying kites, riding bikes, playing hide'n'seek, etc.

We would estimate that informal use of the park approaches 15,000 visits per annum. This will increase as more housing is built, more tourists come to the area, and transport links with other areas of London improve.

Formal or organized use of the park is more easily measured. School visits are currently running at 2-3 groups of 35 children per week, around 2,000 p.a. In 1989 there were 6 BTCV task days with an average of 15 participants and we had several regular volunteers - a total volunteer involvement of 106 person/days. For most of 1989 we had a team of 6 ET trainees working 2 days per week in the park: approx. 570 training days. Apart from the Warden, other TRUE staff take part in managing and monitoring the park, raising funds, planning new projects, etc. Total person/days approx. 350-370 p.a. In addition, the park receives regular visits from landscape designers, conservationists, teachers and other interested professionals from all over Britain and overseas. We have also hosted visits from groups of businesspeople.

We would estimate that formal or organized use of the park is around 3,200 visits p.a. many of which lasted for half a day or more.

PROJECTED FUTURE USE.

We would expect the main increase in visits to come from increased educational use. These will probably double in 1990. When the habitat creation programme is complete the parks 'carrying capacity' for school visits will be around 280 classes per year (10,000 children). Informal visits by tourists and local people will undoubtedly increase as the park becomes more interesting and better known, but it is impossible at present to guess how quickly and by how much.

In 1990, we hope to double the number of volunteer days. We are also exploring the possibility of having people on Community Service Orders work on the site: potentially 280-300 person days per year. As Stave Hill (and the Trust in general) become better known, more people will come to visit the site for professional reasons. Our programme of small conferences and workshops will also increase visitor numbers.

Provided that adequate funding can be obtained, the park's future looks bright and annual visits in 1993 could total more than 50,000 per annum.

Educational Development Work.

At present, despite the lack of classroom facilities and the absence of an Educational Worker, Stave Hill receives an average of 2 to 3 school visits per week in term time - more than 2,000 children per year.

In order that Stave Hill Ecological Park can be fully utilised by both the adjacent schools and schools from further afield, with full co-operation with other local educational facilities (including TRUE's other site in Surrey Docks: Lavender Pond) it is essential that a full-time Educational Worker be appointed to assist the Warden on-site and undertake Outreach and Educational Development work. TRUE is therefore seeking funding for such a post and for the creation of an Education Area in the southern part of the park. (See below.)

We would anticipate that this would immediately double usage by local schoolchildren. Numbers will rise further as the development programme proceeds, the adjacent CTC and RC Primary school open, and transport links to other parts of SE London and north of the river improve.

In addition to its role as a local facility, Stave Hill E.P. acts as a national demonstration site showing how derelict land can be transformed into attractive and ecologically valuable greenspace. We would hope that it can perform a similar function in relation to the educational use of such places. Attracting teachers, educationalists and conservationists to the park for specialist training courses, to see demonstration projects, learn about habitat design, etc.

Educational development work will therefore encompass not only the supervision of visiting schools groups and related outreach work, but working closely with the adjacent schools to develop a high degree of involvement in the running of the park by pupils and teachers. Opportunities also exist for curriculum development work and adult education via the CTC's community college functions.

It is important to stress that the educational opportunities are not limited to the park, but could and should encompass all aspects of the local environment. In particular there would be close co-operation with TRUE's other nature park in Surrey Docks, Lavender Pond, and with the Pumphouse and the Surrey Docks City Farm. We would also hope that future arrangements for the management of Russia Dock Woodland (a nearby area of naturalistic planting) will allow use of at least some areas for educational work.

TRUE is particularly keen to ensure that children with disabilities and children from ethnic minorities become interested and involved in urban nature conservation. We are currently developing a series of projects in the field of urban conservation and disabled people, and also hope to develop materials about urban wildlife in minority languages. Beyond the immediate neighbourhood, considerable opportunities exist for exchange visits between local schools and schools elsewhere in Britain and, perhaps, further afield.

Finally, TRUE is currently able to offer training in urban conservation and related fields via the ET scheme. We will be developing higher level, specialist training courses in various aspects of urban nature park management over the next few years, including use for education.

Habitat Creation Programme

The Trust intends to improve facilities for education, disabled people and increase participation by the local community by undertaking a series of projects to create new features and habitats throughout the park. This programme is necessary in part because of adjustments to the park boundary resulting from the development of the RC primary school, the need to establish a boundary feature between the park and the CTC, the need for a pedestrian route along the northern boundary and the possibility of siting a windmill in the NW corner of the park. It will, however, greatly enhance the area's value to both wildlife and people.

I. THE EDUCATION AREA.

The attached maps and diagrams show our proposals for this part of the park. The whole of the southern section will be designated an Education Area (although the rest of the park will continue to be used by school groups) and be made fully accessible to disabled people by constructing surfaced paths.

Major new features proposed are as follows:

1. A hedge and ditch running down the western boundary. The ditch will be kept wet throughout the year and may incorporate a system of sluices or weirs. The hedge will contain a mixture of traditional hedgerow plants: hawthorn, field maple, privet, dog rose, holly, crab apple, blackthorn, hazel, bird cherry, and clematis.
2. A ridge-and-furrow meadow. This is an ancient form of meadow that develops on ploughed land. The combination of drier ridgetops and wetter furrow bottoms supports a greater variety of plants than flat land.
3. A Birch/Pine habitat. This will introduce a new kind of woodland to Stave Hill that will support many species of fungi, provide nesting sites for birds and food for a wide variety of insects. The Pines will be visually important, providing some greenery in winter and an attractive contrast with the birches during the rest of the year.
4. A micro-habitat demonstration area. Many urban sites are very small and wildlife gardens or nature areas can only be created using containers or building structures to contain raised beds or ponds. We propose to set aside an area where designs for small habitats can be tested and exhibited.
5. A 'Habitat mound'. This feature is designed to produce a variety of habitats ranging from a dry chalk grassland, through a rubble bank to shady and damp walls where mosses, liverworts and ferns can be grown. The mound will be fully accessible to disabled people and also incorporate a 'herb trail' around its perimeter plus a 'scent and touch garden' for blind people.
6. A Fungi Garden. Our aim here is to produce conditions which will encourage the presence of a large variety of fungi in a small space. Fungi are excellent subjects for investigation by schoolchildren and can feature in projects on almost any subject from chemistry to cookery.
7. Orchard and Hop garden. These traditional features of the landscape of southern England have a long history of association with East London. Many older members of the local community went hop and apple picking in their youth. We believe that these features are not only attractive and interesting from a wildlife point of view, but will also help us involve local people in running the park.
8. A Nursery, where local schoolchildren, and perhaps adults too, can learn to grow native plants for use in the park or in school nature areas.

II. NORTH SECTION.

- A) CTC/Park Boundary. Additional planting along this boundary in the take the form of a beech-dominated hedgerow.
- B) New wetland areas will be created along the northern boundary in the course of constructing the new pedestrian path.
- C) If a windmill to pump groundwater into Russia Dock Woodland's waterways is located in the park, an artificial stream could be created to feed into the parks central wetland features. These could then be expanded to include a peat bog and/or reedbed.
- D) A Willow carr is planned for part of the area around the central pond with the aim of providing material for the traditional craft of basketmaking.

COSTINGS

Revenue Funding:

1990/91 Total over 3 years.

Staffing* (inc. National Insurance)	31,496	100,270
Running costs†	2,950	9,391

* Warden, Asst. Warden, Education/Outreach plus
Landscape projects manager (10% of time),
Director (10% of time)
Asst. Director (5% of time)
Other staff (graphics, site wardens, admin.)

£ Travel	300
Admin. (post, tel. stationery)	400
Training	200
Advertising & publicity	700
Insurance, audit, prof. fees	400
Ref. books, guides, etc.	100
Plants, seeds, pots, etc.	200
Heat, light, water, rent	300
Misc. (cleaning materials)	50

Capital Funding:

Fungi garden	2,090
Habitat mound & integral paths	5,700
Paths (60mx1.5m, brick)	4,500
Orchard & Hop Garden	2,000
Ridge & Furrow meadow	1,200
Water supply to Education Area	1,500
Demonstration micro-habitats	2,500
Tools, equipment, plants	1,200
VAT	3,103

Total

23,793

Capital + Revenue = 133,454

Sources of Funding:

LDDC (75%) 100,090

Balance funded as follows:

TRUE generated income (contracts; conferences, sales)	9,000
Sponsorship (British Telecom, Glaxo, Tesco, Fullers)	15,000
Grants (LBGU, LBS, NCC + charitable trusts)	7,500
Local fundraising, donations	1,850

Total over 3 years

33,350

